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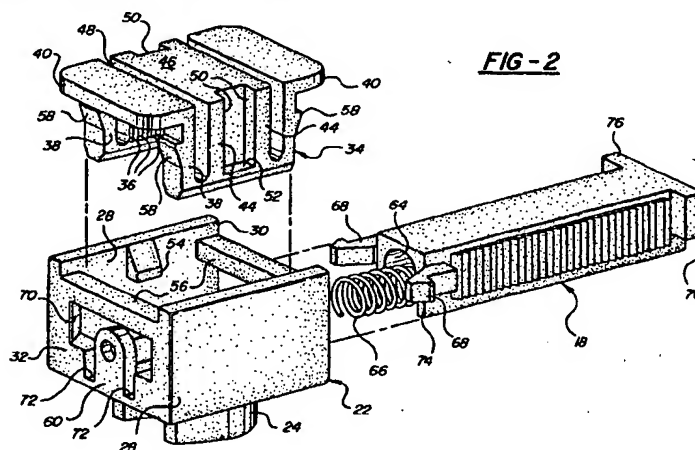
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(54) Serviceable core adjustment

(57) A motion transmitting remote control assembly for transmitting motion in a curved path comprising a flexible motion transmitting core element (12) movably supported by a conduit (14). An adjustment mechanism is disposed on the end of the core element (12) for adjusting the length of the core element (12) and includes a slider member (18) attached to one end of the core element (12) and presenting slider teeth (20) on the exterior thereof and a housing (22) slidably supporting the slider member (18) for movement along the longitudinal axis and adapted for connection to a control member. The housing (22) has a bottom (26) and an opening extending upwardly from the bottom (26) and surrounded by sides (28) parallel to the longitudinal axis and first (30) and second (32) ends extending transverse to the longitudinal axis and a locking button (34) is supported in the opening in the housing (22) for moving

between an unlocked position in which the slider member (18) may slide freely relative to the housing (22) and a locked position in which the slider member (18) is prevented from sliding relative to the housing (22). The locking button (34) is U-shaped and presents button teeth (36) on the interior thereof for engaging the slider teeth (20) in the locked position. The assembly characterized by the locking button (34) including release tabs (38, 40) engaging the first and second ends (30, 32) of the opening in the housing (22) for retaining the locking button (34) in the locked position in the housing (22) and for releasing the locking button (34) from the locked position in the housing (22) in response to forces applied thereto in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis.



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Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

The subject invention relates to a motion transmitting remote control assembly of the type for transmitting motion in a curved path by a flexible motion transmitting core element which has an adjustment mechanism on the end of the core element to adjust the length of the core element. More specifically, the invention relates to an improvement in the configuration of the adjustment mechanism.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Adjustment mechanisms for adjusting the length of the core element during installation of the control assembly are well known. However, the subject invention was made against the background of the assemblies shown in U.S. Patents 5,295,408 and 5,477,745, the latter of which is assigned to the assignee of the subject invention. Such assemblies are installed in automotive vehicles to control various devices by manual input from the vehicle operator. During installation, the overall length of the control assembly is adjusted. However, it frequently occurs that the length of the control assembly must be adjusted during service of the vehicle. There is, therefore, a constant requirement for a core adjust assembly which is easily manually removed from the locked position for readjustment during service.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AND ADVANTAGES

A motion transmitting remote control assembly for transmitting motion in a curved path comprising a flexible motion transmitting core element movably supported by a conduit and a slider member attached to one end of the core element and presenting slider teeth on the exterior thereof. A housing slidably supports the slider member for movement along the longitudinal axis and is adapted for connection to a control member. The housing has a bottom and an opening extending upwardly from the bottom and surrounded by sides parallel to the longitudinal axis and first and second ends extending transverse to the longitudinal axis. A locking button is supported by the housing for moving between an unlocked position in which the slider member may slide freely relative to the housing and a locked position in which the slider member is prevented from sliding relative to the housing, the locking button being U-shaped and presenting button teeth on the interior thereof for engaging the slider teeth in the locked position. The assembly characterized by the locking button including release tabs engaging the first and second ends of the opening in the housing for retaining the locking button in the locked position in the housing and for releasing the locking button from the locked position in the housing in response to forces applied thereto in a direction parallel

to the longitudinal axis.

Accordingly, the subject invention provides an improved core adjust mechanism in which the locking button may be easily manually grasped and released from the locked position for service and thereafter re-locked. Most importantly, the novel mechanism requires a compact space because the release tabs are longitudinally aligned rather than taking up valuable space on the sides of the adjusting mechanism. The placement of the locking tabs on the ends also allows the retention detent to be placed on the sides of the mechanism, resulting in a more sturdy retention detent.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Other advantages of the present invention will be readily appreciated as the same becomes better understood by reference to the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 is a perspective view showing the adjustment mechanism in the locked position;

Figure 2 is an exploded perspective view of the adjustment mechanism from the same perspective as Figure 1;

Figure 3 is an exploded perspective view of the adjustment mechanism from the opposite end;

Figure 4 is a bottom view of the housing showing the connector for connection of the core element to a member to be controlled; and

Figure 5 is an end view of the housing taken substantially along line 5-5 of Figure 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to the Figures, wherein like numerals reference like or corresponding parts throughout the several views, a motion transmitting remote control assembly for transmitting motion in a curved path is generally shown at 10 in Figure 1. The assembly 10 comprises a flexible motion transmitting core element 12 and a conduit 14 movably supporting the core element 12. A fitting 16 is molded about the end of the conduit 14 for attaching the conduit 14 to a support structure, i.e., the vehicle body.

A slider member, generally indicated at 18, is attached to one end of the core element 12 and presents slider teeth 20 on the exterior thereof.

A housing, generally indicated at 22, slidably supports the slider member 18 for movement along the longitudinal axis and is adapted for connection to a control member; not shown. More specifically, the housing 22 includes a connection 24 for connecting the housing to a control member, the connection being a "C" shaped clip disposed on one side 28 of the housing 22. The housing 22 has a bottom 26 and an opening extending upwardly from the bottom 26 and surrounded by sides

28 parallel to the longitudinal axis and first 30 and second 32 ends extending transverse to the longitudinal axis.

A locking button, generally indicated at 34, is supported by the housing 22 for moving between an unlocked position in which the slider member 18 may slide freely relative to the housing 22 and a locked position (shown in Figure 1) in which the slider member 18 is prevented from sliding relative to the housing 22. The locking button 34 is U-shaped and presents button teeth 36 on the interior thereof for engaging the slider teeth 20 in the locked position.

The assembly is characterized by the locking button 34 including release tabs 38, 40 engaging the first and second ends 30 and 32 of the opening in the housing 22 for retaining the locking button 34 in the locked position in the housing 22 and for releasing the locking button 34 from the locked position in the housing 22 in response to forces applied thereto in a direction parallel to the longitudinal axis. The tabs comprise a pair of tab legs 38 and a shelf 40. The importance of the release tabs 38, 40 being on the longitudinal ends is that the mechanism is more compact laterally yet is very accessible and sturdy, i.e., the mechanism remains narrow.

The locking button 34 includes a central body 42 having lateral surfaces 44 for engaging the interior of the sides 28 of the housing 22 and a top 46 extending between the lateral surfaces 44. The central body 42 has U-shaped end surfaces 48 extending transversely to the longitudinal axis and intersecting the lateral surfaces 44 and the top 46. A channel 50 is disposed in each of the lateral surfaces 44 extending from the top 46 downwardly to a step 52. Catches 54 are disposed on the interior of the sides 28 of the housing 22 for preventing the locking button 34 from being removed from the housing 22 in the unlocked position. Each of the catches 54 includes a wedge surface for riding over the step 52 and into the channel 50 in the adjacent lateral surface 44 for retaining the locking button 34 to the housing 22 during movement between the locked and unlocked positions. In other words, during shipping, the locking button 34 will be connected to the housing 22 as the abutment of the catches 54 will be retained in the channel 50.

The first and second ends 30, 32 each include a cross beam 56 extending between the sides 28 of the housing 22 in spaced relationship to the bottom 26 to define an opening for receiving the slider member 18. Each cross beam 56 defines a tongue and a ramp 58 is disposed on each tab leg 38 in spaced relationship to the shelf 40 to define a groove therebetween and for ramping over each of the cross beams 56 whereby each of the cross beams 56 is disposed in one of the grooves in the locked position. Accordingly, the assembly includes a tongue and groove for mechanically interlocking each of the tabs 38, 40 and the housing 22 in the locked position, with each tongue and groove extending transversely to the longitudinal axis.

Each of the tab legs 38 is spaced from the adjacent

end surface 48 of central body 42 and is connected to the central body 42 at the lower ends thereof. Each shelf 40 interconnects the upper ends of the tab legs 38 and the shelves 40 extend longitudinally in opposite directions away from the central body 42. The shelves 40 extend longitudinally over the cross beams 56 in the locked position whereby the shelves 40 may be manually grasped and forced together toward the end surfaces 48 to clear the ramps 58 from the cross beams 56 to remove the locking button 34 from the locked position to the unlocked position.

A spring abutment 60 is disposed in the opening at the second end 32. The slider member 18 includes a passage extending between a closed end 62 and an open end 64, the spring abutment 60 being disposed in the passage for sliding movement of the slider member 18 over the spring abutment 60. A spring 66 is disposed in the passage and reacts between the closed end 62 and the spring abutment 60 to urge the slider member 18 out of the first end 30 of the housing 22.

A pair of hooks 68 are disposed on the opposite sides of the slider member 18 and extend through the opening in the second end 32 to hook onto the second end 32 to prevent the slider member 18 from moving out of the housing 22 in a shipping condition. The hooks 68 are also disposed under the locking button 34 in the shipping condition to prevent the locking button 34 from being moved down and into the locked position until the slider member 18 is manually moved from the shipping position against the force of the spring 66 to move the hooks 68 out of the housing 22.

A pair of latches 70 disposed at opposite sides of the opening in the second end 32 for forcing the hooks 68 together as the slider member 18 is initially coupled with the housing 22 and the hooks 68 snap over the latches 70 and into mechanical interlocking engagement therewith.

The shelves 40 and the top 46 of the locking button 34 are in the same plane in the locked position. This is possible because the cross beams 56 are below the upper extremities of the sides 28 of the housing 22 and the upper extremities of the sides 28 are also in the same plane with the shelves 40 and the top 46 in the locked position.

The bottom 26 has guides 72 extending longitudinally from the first end 30 to the second end 32 and the slider member 18 includes longitudinally extending rails 74 disposed in the guides 72. The slider member 18 also includes retaining flanges 76 for retaining the slider member 18 within the housing 22 by preventing the slider member from exiting the opening surrounding the abutment 60.

The core element 12 extends through a hole in the spring abutment 60 and through the passage of the slider member 18 and through a hole in the closed end 62 of the slider member (s). The core element 12 therefore extends through the spring 66. The core element 12 includes a slug 76 for transmitting forces from the core element 12 to the slider member 18.

The invention has been described in an illustrative manner, and it is to be understood that the terminology which has been used is intended to be in the nature of words of description rather than of limitation.

Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is, therefore, to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims, wherein reference numerals are merely for convenience and are not to be in any way limiting, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.

Claims

1. A motion transmitting remote control assembly for transmitting motion in a curved path comprising:
 - a flexible motion transmitting core element (12);
 - a conduit (14) movably supporting said core element (12);
 - a slider member (18) attached to one end of said core element (12) and presenting slider teeth (20) on said exterior thereof;
 - a housing (22) slidably supporting said slider member (18) for movement along said longitudinal axis and adapted for connection to a control member;
 - said housing (22) having a bottom (26) and an opening extending upwardly from said bottom (26) and surrounded by sides (28) parallel to said longitudinal axis and first (30) and second (32) ends extending transverse to said longitudinal axis;
 - a locking button (34) supported by said housing (22) for moving between an unlocked position in which said slider member (18) may slide freely relative to said housing (22) and a locked position in which said slider member (18) is prevented from sliding relative to said housing (22);
 - said locking button (34) being U-shaped and presenting button teeth (36) on said interior thereof for engaging said slider teeth (20) in said locked position;
 - said assembly characterized by said locking button (34) including release tabs (38, 40) engaging said first and second ends (30, 32) of said opening in said housing (22) for retaining said locking button (34) in said locked position in said housing (22) and for releasing said locking button (34) from said locked position in said housing (22) in response to forces applied thereto in a direction parallel to said longitudinal axis.
2. An assembly as set forth in claim 1 including a tongue and groove for mechanically interlocking each of said tabs (38, 40) and said housing (22) in said locked position, each tongue and groove extending transversely to said longitudinal axis.
3. An assembly as set forth in claim 2 including catches (54) on said interior of said sides (28) of said housing (22) for preventing said locking button (34) from being removed from said housing (22) in said unlocked position.
4. An assembly as set forth in claim 3 wherein said locking button (34) includes a central body (42) having lateral surfaces (44) for engaging said interior of said sides (28) of said housing (22) and a top (46) extending between said lateral surfaces (44), said central body (42) having U-shaped end surfaces (48) extending transversely to said longitudinal axis and intersecting said lateral surfaces (44) and said top (46), a channel (50) in each of said lateral surfaces (44) extending from said top (46) downwardly to a step (52), each catch (54) includes a wedge surface for riding over said step (52) and into said channel (50) in said adjacent lateral surface (44) for retaining said locking button (34) to said housing (22) during movement between said locked and unlocked positions.
5. An assembly as set forth in claim 4 wherein each of said tabs (38, 40) includes a pair of tab legs (38) and a shelf (40), said tab legs (38) being spaced from said adjacent end surface (48) of central body (42) and connected to said central body (42) at said lower ends thereof, each shelf (40) interconnecting said upper ends of said tab legs (38) and extending longitudinally in opposite directions away from said central body (42).
6. An assembly as set forth in claim 5 wherein said first and second ends (30, 32) include a cross beam (56) extending between said sides (28) of said housing (22) in spaced relationship to said bottom (26) to define an opening for receiving said slider member (18), each cross beam (56) defining one of said tongues, a ramp (58) disposed on each tab leg (38) in spaced relationship to said shelf (40) to define said grooves and for ramping over each of said cross beams (56) whereby each of said cross beams (56) is disposed in one of said grooves in said locked position.
7. An assembly as set forth in claim 6 wherein said shelves (40) extend longitudinally over said cross beams (56) in said locked position whereby said shelves (40) may be manually grasped and forced toward said end surfaces (48) to clear said ramps (58) from said cross beams (56) to remove said locking button (34) from said locked position to said unlocked position.
8. An assembly as set forth in claim 7 including a

- spring abutment (60) disposed in said opening at said second end (32), said slider member (18) includes a passage extending between a closed end (62) and an open end (64), said spring abutment (60) being disposed in said passage for sliding movement of said slider member (18) over said spring abutment (60), a spring (66) disposed in said passage and reacting between said closed end (62) and said spring abutment (60) to urge said slider member (18) out of said first end (30) of said housing (22).
9. An assembly as set forth in claim 8 including a pair of hooks (68) disposed on said opposite sides of said slider member (18) and extending through said opening in said second end (32) to hook onto said second end (32) to prevent said slider member (18) from moving out of said housing (22) in a shipping condition, said hooks (68) being disposed under said locking button (34) in said shipping condition to prevent said locking button (34) from being moved to said locked position until said slider member (18) is moved from said shipping position against said force of said spring (66).
10. An assembly as set forth in claim 9 including a pair of latches (70) disposed at opposite sides of said opening in said second end (32) for forcing said hooks (68) together as said slider member (18) is initially coupled with said housing (22) and said hooks (68) snap over said latches (70) and into mechanical interlocking engagement therewith.
11. An assembly as set forth in claim 10 wherein said shelves (40) and said top (46) of said locking button (34) are in said same plane in said locked position.
12. An assembly as set forth in claim 11 wherein said cross beams (56) are below said upper extremities of said sides (28) of said housing (22) and said upper extremities of said sides (28) are also in said same plane with said shelves (40) and said top (46) in said locked position.
13. An assembly as set forth in claim 12 wherein said bottom (26) has guides (72) extending longitudinally from said first end (30) to said second end (32), said slider member (18) including longitudinally extending rails (74) disposed in said guides (72).
14. An assembly as set forth in claim 13 wherein said core element (12) extends through said spring abutment (60) and said passage of said slider member (18) and through said closed end (62) of said slider member (18), said core element (12) including a slug (76) for transmitting forces from said core element (12) to said slider member (18).
15. An assembly as set forth in claim 14 wherein said core element (12) extends through said spring (66).
16. An assembly as set forth in claim 15 wherein said housing (22) includes a connection (24) for connecting said housing to a control member.
17. An assembly as set forth in claim 16 wherein said connection (24) includes a "C" shaped clip disposed on one side (28) of said housing (22).

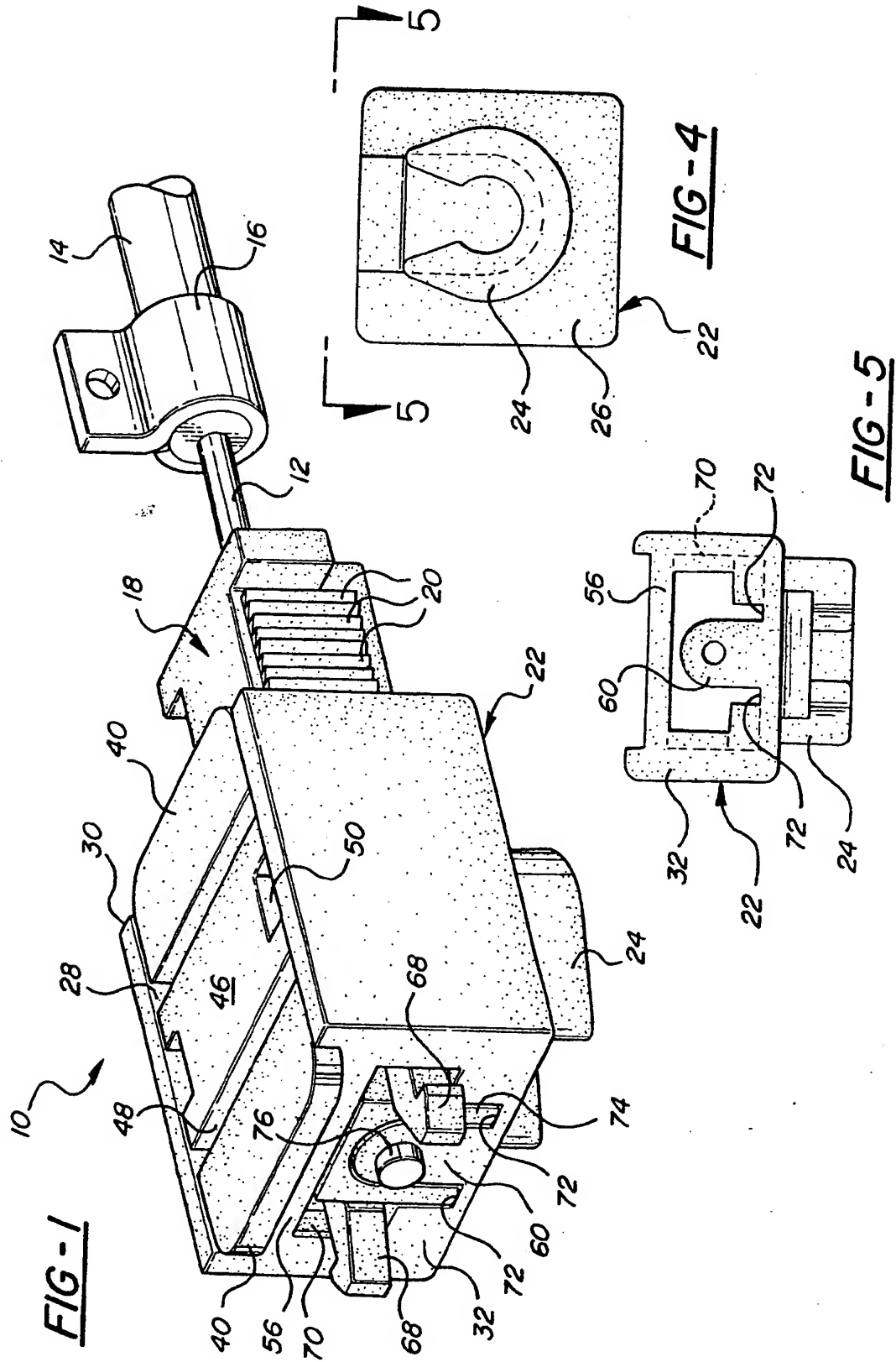


FIG - 2

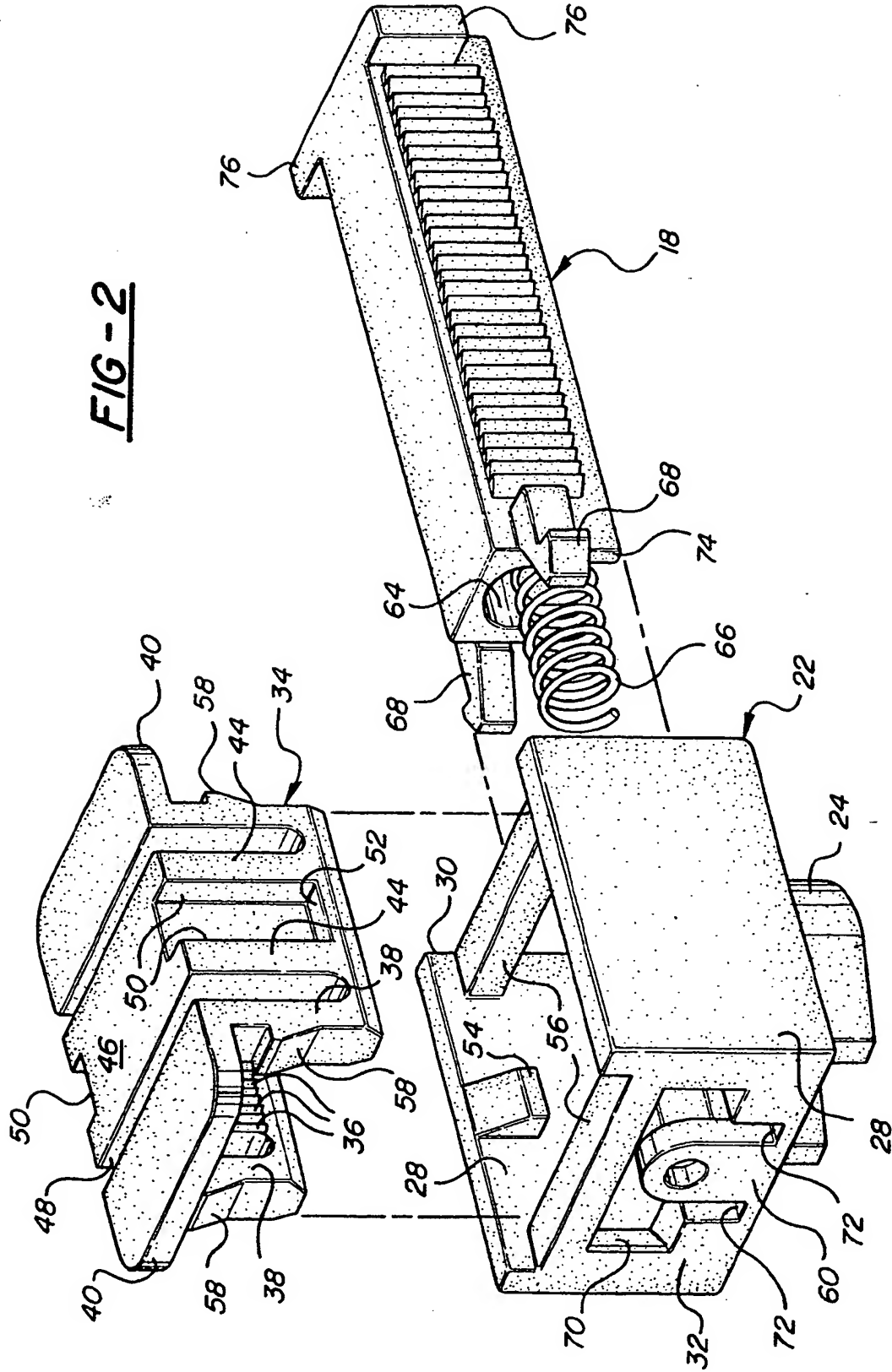
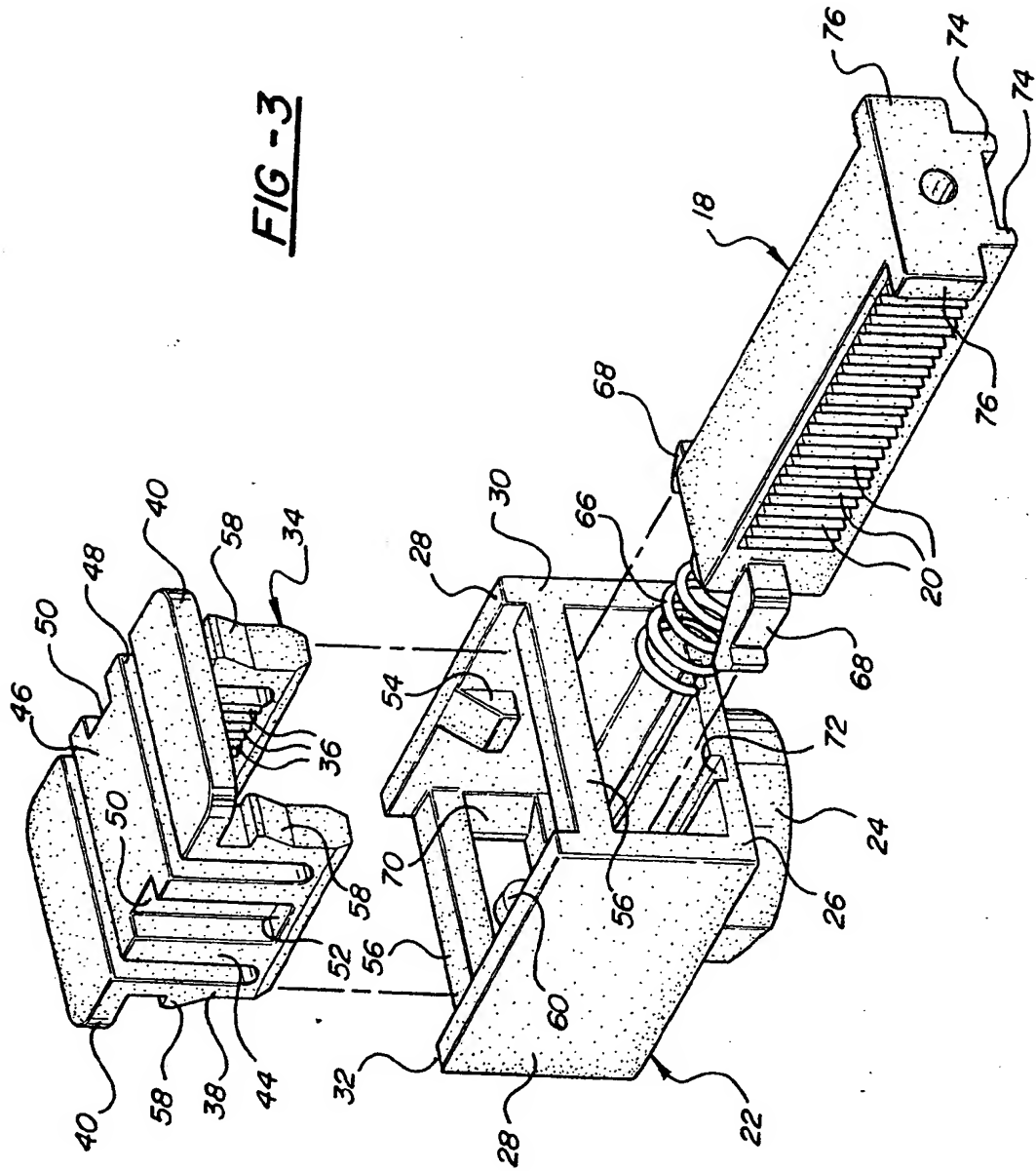


FIG -3



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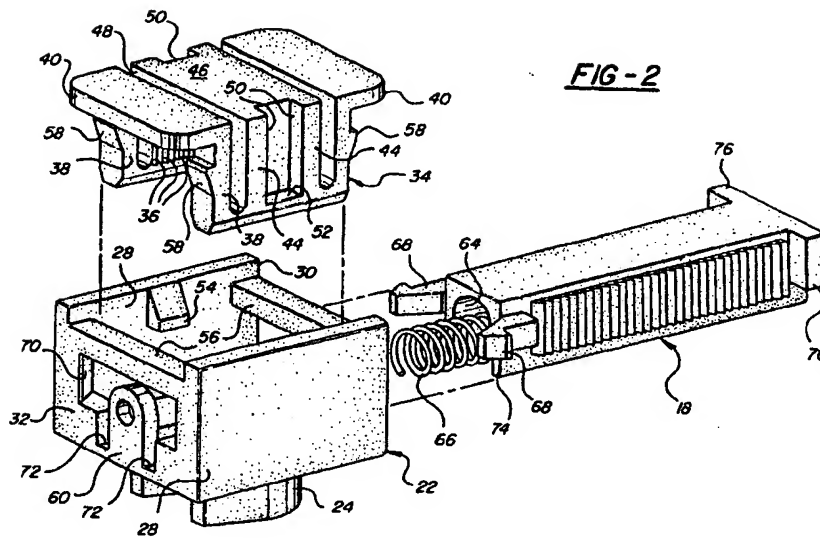
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 97 20 0952

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
A	US 5 394 770 A (BOIKE) 7 March 1995 * the whole document * ---	1-3,6,16	F16C1/22
D,A	US 5 477 745 A (BOIKE) 26 December 1995 * the whole document * ---	1,2,6,8, 9,13-17	
D,A	US 5 295 408 A (NAGLE) 22 March 1994 * the whole document * ---	1	
A	US 5 163 338 A (SHARP) 17 November 1992 * the whole document * ---	1	
P,A	US 5 605 074 A (HALL) 25 February 1997 * the whole document * -----	1,16	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)
			F16C
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		9 July 1998	Orthlieb, C
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